

# Local Records Retention Schedules

Missouri Revised Statutes Chapter 109 (Public and Business Records) Section 255 authorizes the Local Records Board to establish minimum retention periods for the administrative, fiscal and legal records created by local governments.

Retention and disposition of records that are common to many offices are included in the General Schedule. Records unique to particular offices are addressed in individual office schedules.

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## County Clerk—Public Relief Records Retention Schedule

See also the [General Records Retention Schedule](#).

### Using this Records Retention Schedule

Everyday local government offices throughout Missouri produce records that document the rights of citizens, the actions of the government that serves them and the history of the community in which they live. It is the responsibility of local government to effectively maintain and manage these records and to ensure the continued preservation of those records of essential evidence that have enduring and permanent value.

The introduction to this retention schedule provides local government officials with basic information on records and the application of retention schedules.

### What is a Record?

A "**record**" is defined as any "document, book, paper, photograph, map, sound recording or other material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to law or in connection with the transaction of official business" (109.210(5) RSMo). This definition includes those records created, used and maintained in electronic form.

### Non-Records

Even though records include a broad spectrum of recorded information, not all recorded information is a record. According to Section 109.210(5) RSMo, the following are not records: "...Library and museum material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes, extra copies of documents preserved only for convenience of reference, and stocks of publications and of processed documents are not included within the definition of records..."

Other examples of non-records include the following materials:

- Identical copies of documents maintained in the same file.
- Extra copies of printed or processed materials (official copies of which are retained by the office of record).
- Superseded manuals and other directives (maintained outside the office of record).
- Materials documenting employee fringe activities (blood donors, charitable funds, social and professional meetings, etc.)
- Work papers and drafts of reports or correspondence. Transcribed stenographic materials.
- Blank forms.

- Materials received from other activities that require no action (official copies of which are retained by the office of record).
- Catalogs, trade journals and other publications or papers received from government agencies, commercial firms or private institutions that require no action and are not part of an action case record.

Non-records do not require retention scheduling or destruction authorization or reporting. To control excessive accumulation, it is necessary to keep only current, useful materials and to destroy non-records immediately after needs have been satisfied. Avoid filing non-record material with records.

### **The Value of Local Government Records**

Some records, because of their enduring administrative, fiscal, legal or historical value, should be permanently retained. These records require that special care and consideration be given to their storage conditions and the feasibility of preservation microfilming. Examples of permanent records include year-end reports; minutes; property records such as deeds; and birth, death and marriage records.

Most records do not have values that warrant their permanent preservation. Those records with short-term value should, upon reaching end of the retention period, be destroyed.

### **Statutory Authority for Establishing Records Retention Requirements**

In 1965, the Missouri General Assembly established a State Records Commission to approve retentions for records produced by state agencies. In 1972, Missouri's Business and Public Records Law (Chapter 109) was expanded to include local government. Thus, the Missouri Local Records Board was established to set retention times for local government records. The 16-member board, chaired by the Secretary of State, consists of local government officials from all classes of counties and cities, elementary and secondary education, higher education and a person active in historical society groups.

Supplemental to the Local Records Board, the Records Management and Archives Service of the Secretary of State's office provides assistance to local governments and implements board policy.

### **Application of the Records Retention Schedule**

This schedule establishes minimum retention periods and authorizes dispositions for many of the administrative, fiscal and legal records common to most local governments. Retention periods are based upon federal and state mandates, record surveys, business needs, and general knowledge as to how long records should be kept. Using the schedule as a guide and without seeking further approval from the Local Records Board, any local government may regularly dispose of any of its records that appear on this schedule. The schedule is subject to the following exceptions and limitations:

- A. Local government offices may retain any of their records beyond the retention periods set by the schedule, as they deem necessary. The schedule establishes only a minimum period of retention. Before retaining a record longer than the minimum time required, however, the office should be certain that it has good reason to do so. Unnecessary retention of records can be expensive in space and filing equipment and may expose the office to costly litigation and discovery requirements.
- B. This schedule does not relieve local governments of retention requirements mandated by other state and federal statutes and regulations. When such an obligation does exist, then the longer retention period takes precedence.
- C. This schedule generally reflects audit requirements in its prescribed retention periods, but audits are not always completed in a timely fashion. Therefore, any record required for an

audit must be retained until completion of that audit, regardless of its stated retention period in the schedule.

- D. This schedule does not authorize destruction of records that could be deemed relevant to current or pending litigation.

Retention and disposition of records that are common to many offices are included in the General Schedule. Records unique to particular offices are addressed in individual office schedules. All schedules are available on the Secretary of State's website at

<http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/localrecs/schedules>

### **Destruction of Records**

The records classification and retention periods in this manual constitute legal authority for retention and disposal of official records. No records can be destroyed until they meet the minimum retention period listed in this manual. In cases where there is no schedule for a particular record series, the Local Records Board must grant permission for the destruction.

The disposition of records should be recorded in a document such as the minutes of the city council or other legally constituted authority that has permanent record status. The record should include the description and quantity of each record series disposed of, manner of destruction, inclusive dates covered and the date on which destruction was accomplished.

The retention schedule does not prescribe the method of destruction (shredding, burning, landfills, etc.), however, record series with a disposition of *Destroy securely* contain confidential data. These records should be destroyed under the supervision of a competent person(s) designated (or appointed) to ensure that no records fall into unauthorized hands and that the data cannot be reconstructed.

### **Preservation of Permanent Records**

A fundamental, yet often neglected obligation of local government is to care for its permanent records-in this case, some of the records that it generates and receives. The records that have been identified as permanent require special handling and storage if they are to be preserved. The continuous interaction between a record's medium-paper, magnetic tape, film, etc. -and the quality of the environment in which it is kept-temperature, humidity, light, and air-determines the severity and rate of its deterioration.

By microfilming older, deteriorating, but permanently valuable records, local governments can generate durable copies for research and prevent further damage or deterioration of the original. When filmed, processed, and maintained to archival specifications, the master negative will ensure that permanently valuable records are preserved for generations to come.

*The Missouri Local Records Grant program can provide financial assistance in the form of grants-in-aid to supplement local funds for preservation initiatives, such as archival supplies, shelving and preservation microfilming.*

### **A Note about Electronic Records**

Permanent records existing solely in electronic form are in danger of becoming inaccessible through media decay and hardware/software obsolescence. Periodic migration and transfer of permanent records to stable preservation media, such as microfilm, should be considered as a best practice for local government to fulfill its statutory responsibility to maintain permanent records.

### **A Note about Retention Periods**

This schedule provides minimum retentions. Local authorities may choose to keep a particular series or record for a longer period of time. It should be kept in mind, however, that a record kept beyond its listed retention must be made available for inspection upon request.

**Retention Definitions:**

**COA=Completion of Audit.** Note that COA is coupled with a lot of 5-year entries to help encourage regular audits. Not all jurisdictions are required to have audits by statute. Audits for some municipalities are governed by the level of federal financing for bonds and public improvements, and thus are governed by federal retentions. Most municipalities are governed by their local authority (alderman, council, mayor, etc.) for auditing policy. Local jurisdictions may consult RSMo 29 to review the State Auditor's chapter for petition audits (see RSMo 250 for large capital projects such as bonds for water and sewer). For general auditing explanations and advice we recommend that clerks contact the State Auditor's office at 573.751.4213.

**DCA=Destroy in Current Area/Reference.** Series with these retentions are considered "reference" records and may be destroyed when they are no longer of use.

**Modifications and Additions**

Because records reflect activities that are constantly changing, the retention requirements for them sometimes require revision as well. Consequently, records retention and disposition schedules often need modification or additions in order to be realistic and effective. Furthermore, because local governments are so large, it is impractical to consult with every office regarding specific schedule entries. There may be some retention periods and disposition requirements within this schedule that fail to account for all relevant factors and there may be some important record series not addressed here which need to be added. The Local Records Program welcomes all comments and suggestions concerned with improvement of record retention schedules through modifications and additions.

**For further information on any records management or preservation issue, please contact:**

Missouri Secretary of State  
Local Records Preservation Program  
PO Box 1747, Jefferson City, MO 65101-1747  
Telephone: (573) 751-9047  
Fax: (573) 526-3867

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## County Clerk—Public Relief Records Retention Schedule

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See also the [General Records Retention Schedule](#).

### **004.PR 001      Petitions**

<i>Also Called:</i>	Request for Admission; Admission File; Petition to Admit Insane Person to State Hospital; Petition of Admittance with Agreement to Pay Additional Costs; Petition to County Court to Send Lunatic to State Hospital; Insanity Petition; Petition to Send Patient to County Infirmary; Application for an Inquisition as to Lunacy; Information of Insanity; Verified Statement in the Case of an Insane Person; Physician's Certificate; Petition of Insanity by Physician; Application to Have Insane Admitted as County Patient; Application for Support of Insane Person; Application for Admission of Indigent to a State Hospital; Information on Insanity Proceedings; Application of Doctors for Aid at County Hospital to Prevent Closing of Hospital; Petition for 5% General Revenue Funds for County Hospital; Petition for County Hospital Tax Levee; Petition for County Hospital Additional Tax; Petition for Superintendent/Supervisor of County Poor Farm
<i>Function:</i>	1) Requests for admission to a state or county institution, usually for insanity, often involving physician's proof of patient's illness and financial considerations; 2) requests to county court for additional funding for county hospitals; 3) recommendation and signatures presented to county court in support of appointment of an individual to position of Superintendent of County Poor Farm
<i>Content:</i>	May include: 1) name of county; name of potential patient; name of institution; description and duration of condition; detailed medical history; statement of financial condition of patient; names of citizens verifying patient and financial status; agreement to pay additional costs; declaration of state and county residency for petitioner and for potential patient; witness(es) name(s) and signature(s); physician's names and signatures; date of statement; filing date; 2) statements of support from individual taxpayers or associations for additional funding of institutions; signatures; 3) name of candidate; name of office to be filled; statements of recommendation; request for consideration; signatures of petitioners; filing date
<i>Retention:</i>	5 years (applications); permanent (petitions)
<i>Disposition:</i>	Microfilm permanent; destroy 5 year records
<i>Note:</i>	Medical records are closed for 72 years
<i>Approval Date:</i>	August 23, 2007

### **004.PR 002      Commitment and Release Records**

<i>Also Called:</i>	Application for Treatment; Release Deed; Commitment Form of a Child to a Hospital; Commitments of Indigents to a State Hospital; Commitment Orders to State Hospital
<i>Function:</i>	Authorization of financial aid and admittance to a state hospital
<i>Content:</i>	May include: name of patient; name and signature of parent if patient is child; age of child; physician's report; waiver of notice and consent to commitment; name of facility to which patient is committed; date of hearing; permission for surgery; permission to photograph deformity; verification of need for financial support; signature of physician; signature of witnesses for status of financial need
<i>Retention:</i>	Commitment form of a child to a hospital, 5 years; others, 75 years
<i>Disposition:</i>	Archive 75 year records; destroy after maturity
<i>Note:</i>	Medical records are closed for 72 years
<i>Approval Date:</i>	August 23, 2007

### **004.PR 003      Construction Records**

*Also Called:* Specifications  
*Function:* Records related to construction of state institutions  
*Content:* Specifications defining the materials to be furnished and labor performed  
*Retention:* Retain for the life of the structure plus 10 years; may be subject to federal requirements  
*Disposition:* Microfilm historic hospital, infirmary, and poor farm records; destroy others  
*Note:*  
*Approval Date:* August 23, 2007

### **004.PR 004      Correspondence**

*Also Called:* Letters, memoranda  
*Function:* Written communication between various institutions, physicians, legal representatives or officials and the county clerk or court  
*Content:* May include: incoming and outgoing letters, memoranda, notes, and other records  
*Retention:* Permanent  
*Disposition:* Archive. Microfilm for preservation  
*Note:*  
*Approval Date:* August 23, 2007

### **004.PR 005      Court/Legal**

*Also Called:* County Court Cases, Insane Persons; Insanity Records, County; Probate Cases, Insane Persons; Subpoena for Insanity Hearing; Agreement to Pay Support, County Infirmary  
*Function:* Documentation of legal proceedings concerning insane persons  
*Content:* May include: name of insane person; bonds for monthly payment and clothing; appointment of guardian; request for commitment and/or funds; financial settlements; location and time of hearing  
*Retention:* 6 Years after case is closed  
*Disposition:* Destroy  
*Note:*  
*Approval Date:* August 23, 2007

### **004.PR 006      Financial Records**

*Also Called:* Patient Account Records; Settlements; Receipts; Audit Records; Bonds; Bids; Bill of Costs; Fee Bills; Support of Wards  
*Function:* 1) Record of county contributions to institutions for patient care; 2) records of financial status of facility; 3) legal documentation re bonds; 4) offers or proposals of prices for items requested by institution  
*Content:* May include: 1) name of institution; patient name; admittance date; dates and descriptions of expenditures; debits and credits for amounts due; charges for maintenance and clothing; approval signature; filing date; 2) verification of accounts; 3) title of bond; rate of publication; purpose; interest; date of issuance; receipt number; description of transaction; signature of county treasurer; 4) business name and/or name of sales representative; list of items for bid and bulk costs; availability limitations  
*Retention:* Evaluate for historical use; destroy others  
*Disposition:* Archive. Microfilm historical records for preservation  
*Note:*  
*Approval Date:* August 23, 2007

#### **004.PR 007    Insanity Record**

*Also Called:*

*Function:* Documents the institutionalization of persons deemed mentally unstable, and gives vital facts concerning the individual and the expenses incurred by the county for the patient's care

*Content:* May include: date of court order; name; place of residence; age; asylum; payments; date paid to; date of discharge; cause of discharge; record number; remarks

*Retention:* Permanent

*Disposition:* Archive. Microfilm for Preservation

*Note:* Record of time in institution, e.g. expenses, etc.

*Approval Date:* August 23, 2007

#### **004.PR 008    Inventory**

*Also Called:* Inventory of Personal Property of County Poor Farm

*Function:* List of items on hand and their value for the information and approval of the county court

*Content:* May include: livestock and livestock feed; tools for farm and house; machinery; food; tobacco; clothing; furniture; oil; gasoline; seed; coffins; value of items; census of residents

*Retention:* Permanent

*Disposition:* Archive. Microfilm for Preservation

*Note:*

*Approval Date:* August 23, 2007

#### **004.PR 009    Log/Transfer of Dead Bodies**

*Also Called:* Record of Disposition of Human Bodies; Transfer Report; File Papers for Log: Dead Human Bodies Delivered

*Function:* Informs county of final status of patient and delivery of body

*Content:* May include: name of deceased; race; date of birth; age; date of admittance to institution; delivery location; name of local agent; home county of deceased; location of death; date of death; burial location

*Retention:* Permanent

*Disposition:* Archive. Microfilm for preservation

*Note:*

*Approval Date:* August 23, 2007

#### **004.PR 010    Medical Records**

*Also Called:* Medical Certificates; Certificates of Insanity; Detailed Statement of Medical Witnesses; Medical Test Results; Medical Examinations; Certification of Physician; Physician's

*Function:* Verification of condition of potential patient for admittance into suitable institution

*Content:* May include: physician's name and signature; name of patient; age and sex of patient; county of origin; witnesses; date; signature of county clerk; cause and duration of condition; former treatment; recommended treatment; additional information by physician

*Retention:* Permanent

*Disposition:* Archive. Microfilm for preservation

*Note:* Records closed for 72 years at Missouri State Archives

*Approval Date:* August 23, 2007

#### 004.PR 011 Notices

<i>Also Called:</i>	Status of Patient/Inmate from State Institutions; Notice of Inquiry as to Sanity; Notice of Insanity and Subsequent Hearing; Notice of Status of County Patient; Notice to Remove Patient; Notice of Special Term; Notice of Discharge; Notice of Redemption of Bonds; Statement of County Public Hospital Bonds Paid; Notice of Election for Public Hospital
<i>Function:</i>	1) Reports the status of patients whose care is funded by county; 2) notification of sanity hearing; 3) public notification that bonds are called in for payment; 4) public notification of election on funding proposition
<i>Content:</i>	May include: 1) name of county; institution issuing notice; name of patient; race; date of notice; status of patient; date patient to be removed; reason for discharge; signature of superintendent, 2) name of county; name of alleged insane; date, time and location of hearing; signature of county clerk, or presiding justice; 3) title; bond name; issue date; numbers; amount; due date; redemption date; bank name for payment; cessation of interest; 4) statement of purpose of election; sample ballot; date of election
<i>Retention:</i>	Evaluate for historical use; destroy others
<i>Disposition:</i>	Archive. Microfilm historic records
<i>Note:</i>	
<i>Approval Date:</i>	August 23, 2007

#### 004.PR 012 Rules and Orders

<i>Also Called:</i>	Court Orders for Levying Tax for Hospital Purposes; Court Order for Issuance of Bonds; Court Order Sending Individuals to County Infirmary; Certified Copy of Order to Send Lunatic to Hospital for the Insane; Relief Order; Warrant to Convey Patient to State Hospital; Warrant to Commit; Rules and Regulations of County Poor Farm
<i>Function:</i>	1) Funding of state hospitals; 2) admission of patient to institution with funding being provided by county; 3) authorization to merchant to provide goods or services to relief client; 4) authorization to seize individual certified as insane and transport to state hospital; 5) rules and regulations made by the county court for the government of the county poor farm
<i>Content:</i>	May include: 1) details of election; tax levy; or issuance of bonds; 2) date; name of patient; age; statement of need for financial support; notice of order to superintendent of infirmary; name of county court clerk; certification and date; statement of insanity; name of physician; 3) name and address of merchant; name and address of relief client; number in client's family; kind of aid and amount expended; signature of superintendent; 4) number of state hospital; county where issued; name of person authorized to seize patient; name of patient; number of assistants allowed to assist in arrest; date of warrant; signature of clerk; date that hospital received patient; signature of superintendent; sheriff's return; 5) list of regulations for operation of poor farm
<i>Retention:</i>	If recorded in official minutes, retain COA. If not recorded, Permanent
<i>Disposition:</i>	Archive permanent records; destroy others
<i>Note:</i>	See GS 048 Orders Issued by Local Governing Bodies (commissions, councils, legislatures, etc.)
<i>Approval Date:</i>	August 23, 2007

#### 004.PR 013 Oaths of Office

<i>Also Called:</i>	Oaths of Office of Board of Trustees of County Hospital
<i>Function:</i>	Promise to carry out duties of office
<i>Content:</i>	County name; trustee name; office name; date of election or appointment; signature of trustee; verification by county clerk with date and signature; filing date
<i>Retention:</i>	Retain 1 year after expiration of term. Evaluate for historical significance.
<i>Disposition:</i>	Archive. Microfilm historic records
<i>Note:</i>	See GS 046 Oaths of Office
<i>Approval Date:</i>	August 23, 2007



#### **004.PR 014    Permission Records**

*Also Called:* Waivers; Consent Forms; Agree and Consent to Operation; Waiver of Notice and Consent to Commitment; Permission to Use Photographs (For Purpose of Illustrating Treatment); Permission to Operate

*Function:* Agreement of patient, parent or guardian for treatment of patient

*Content:* May include: name of patient; name of parent or guardian; name of facility; date of hearing; subject of agreement; signature of parent or guardian; signature of witnesses

*Retention:* Permanent

*Disposition:* Archive. Microfilm for preservation

*Note:* Records closed for 72 years at Missouri State Archives

*Approval Date:* August 23, 2007

#### **004.PR 015    Personnel**

*Also Called:* Applications for Position

*Function:* Indication of desire to be employed by county poor farm or infirmary

*Content:* May include: date; name of applicant; title of position; salary; request for consideration; signature of applicant; filing date

*Retention:* Evaluate for historical record; destroy others

*Disposition:* Archive and microfilm permanent record

*Note:*

*Approval Date:* August 23, 2007

#### **004.PR 016    Reports**

*Also Called:* Report of Patient Status; Report of Superintendent of County Hospital; Settlement and Report; Annual Report of Hospital; Inmate Report, County Poor Farm; Physician's Report; County Welfare Monthly Report

*Function:* 1) Indicates patient and financial status of facility; 2) report made by physician and given to county court on the medical history of child and any current problems or conditions; 3) report made by County Welfare Officer to county court documenting work completed for the month

*Content:* May include: 1) name of institution; date; status of patients (e.g., admitted, discharged, paroled, escaped, transferred, returned); filing date; earnings; operating expenses; budget; average number of patients; deaths; number of admissions; number treated; gender numbers; race numbers; 2) name and address of patient; date of report; name of facility; age; sex; race; birthplace; chief complaint; family medical history; past medical history of child; present medical condition of child; signature and address of physician; 3) month and year of report; daily listing of actions; expenditures; signature of welfare

*Retention:* Permanent

*Disposition:* Archive. Microfilm for preservation

*Note:* Records closed 72 years at Missouri State Archives

*Approval Date:* August 23, 2007